



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF NEW MARLBOROUGH
OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
807 Mill River Southfield Road, Mill River, MA 01244-0099
Phone: 413-229-8116 Fax: 413-229-6674 E-mail: nmbdselectmen@aol.com**

**Tara B. White, Chair
Michele Shalaby
Nathaniel H. Yohalem
Board of Selectmen**

**Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting
Monday, October 20, 2014**

Board Members Present: Tara B. White, Chairman
Michele Shalaby
Nat Yohalem

Others Present: Sharon Fleck, Administrative Secretary
Monica Webb, Chairmen of the Board, Wired West
Jim Drawe, Vice Chairman, Wired West
Tim Newman, Delegate to the Board of Wired West
Patricia Hardyman
Charles Parton

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen convened at 6:02 p.m.

The Board read the minutes. **After a discussion, a motion was made and seconded and so voted by all members to approve the minutes of the September 29, October 6 and October 15, 2014 Selectmen's meetings, as amended.**

Wired West - Monica Webb, Chairman of the Board, discussed the history of Wired West that was formed in 2011. The purpose, Monica explained, was to provide broadband service to the communities of Western Massachusetts for decades to come, thereby fostering economic development. Each town has one member delegate to the Board and each town has one vote. Economies of scale, not just through financing but through expertise from local civic and business leadership, will be realized through the participation of each individual town. Currently, there are 44 participating towns. Although the State has pledged seed money for this project, the majority of the funds will have to be raised through each of the towns. Monica explained that fiber optic networks offer 1-10 Gbps vs. 40Mbps for wireless and 100 Mbps for DSL. As an example of fiber optic capacity, Monica stated that one fiber (the width of a human hair) can handle all of the telephone traffic in the US simultaneously. She explained that using wireless for broadband is not an option as only a certain amount of data can be sent through the air. Monica explained there appears to be a resurgence of promoting wireless from the State; however, after meetings with towns that are currently using wireless, the conclusion was that it really doesn't work because it is very low bandwidth. She explained the perception is that it's less expensive to build wireless vs. fiber optic. The initial cost to build fiber optic networks is high but the wireless cost is not that

much less expensive. However, wireless must be upgraded/replaced every 5-7 years, whereas there is fiber in the ground now that has been there for 40 years.

Jim Drawe then discussed the financing for this project. The State has contributed \$40-\$45 million to help offset this cost; however the individual towns will have to finance the balance of approximately \$92-\$119 million dollars. The current thought is that each town would issue a bond which will be consolidated by Wired West into either a single drawdown bond or Bond Anticipation Note during construction and then issue a single 20 year bond at the end of construction. The towns would pay interest only during the first three years of construction, or about \$40,000 per town; the principal would then be amortized over a 20 year period. He further explained that for towns such as New Marlborough, which does not have a qualified bond rating, the towns will all be packaged together as one bond offering. The factors determining how much each town will have to pay (because it will vary by town) are the number of poles in town, how long the wires are and the number of homes in each town. The towns which will return the most revenue to Wired West will be the first towns Wired West will serve, offsetting the need to borrow capital. Jim further explained that the models they've been running generate revenue in excess of expenses in year 4 or 5. The Wired West Board of Directors will have discretion as to how those excess revenues are used, but one option for the debt will be that Wired West will then be able to pay both interest and principal for the balance of the 20 year term. They, in fact, may be able to reimburse the towns for the interest payments made during the construction phase. If Wired West goes bankrupt, each town will be responsible for the \$1.25 million, but the physical plant would go to the bondholders. Bankruptcies most often happen in towns where there is competition. Wired West has no competition. Wired West stated it will not go to town meetings unless it has a 40% subscriber rate.

Comments from New Marlborough citizens included the need for broadband in town to help bring and keep businesses in Town, and the need for school children to have access to the internet in order to be able to do research/homework, etc. Another question was asked regarding whether or not the monthly cost of approximately \$30 per month would remain the same under Wired West. Monica explained the cost would be a little higher, i.e. \$50 per month, and the installation fee would be \$100. Wired West stated it will also offer telephone service at a less expensive rate than Verizon. Wired West will pay for the first 300 feet of wire for residents on main roads but the residents will have to pay for the balance of the installation over 300 feet. It has not yet worked out what those fees will be. The cost of installing wires on a private road has not yet been resolved.

Police Policy on Electronic Control Weapons and Use of Force – Chairman White indicated that the Board reviewed and approved both policies that will now be sent to the Attorney General's office for review and approval. Those accepted policies will then be returned to the Town for adoption. Chairman White explained these policies are not a discussion on tasers, but rather a discussion on policies and procedures. The discussion on tasers will take place on Monday, October 27, 2014.

Accessory Dwelling By-Law – Patricia Hardyman stated that by-law changes have been submitted to Town Counsel. The first one is "Modification to 3.3 Use by Right Single Family Dwelling," which would change the size of the allowance for an accessory right. The policy has been changed so that the maximum square footage will not exceed 1200 sq. ft. The second policy is new and sets up an Accessory By-Law. This policy would enable accessory apartments to house caretakers. This allows the creation of an accessory apartment or accessory dwelling by right. It has the same size limitations as the single family dwelling. The accessory apartment

allows for the installation of a stove. Patricia stated that once Counsel has approved these By-Laws, public meetings could further explain these laws to the residents. These by-laws would then be placed on a warrant at the Town Meeting in May 2015. Patricia requested the Board advise her if a Town Meeting were scheduled prior to May 2015.

Stantec Proposal – The Board unanimously agreed to sign the revised proposal submitted by Stantec for the additional cost of engineering for the Clayton Mill River Bridge. The additional \$12,000 in engineering cost is a result of the State mandating this bridge be classified as a Category 2, which requires additional engineering for environmental purposes. A portion of this additional funding is already in the Highway budget. **A motion was made, seconded and so approved to accept to revised Stantec proposal. Michele Shalaby recused herself from this vote.**

Colonial Power – Mark Cappadona from Colonial Power (Hampshire Power) is willing to come to the Town and explain to the residents the many different shades of “green,” and the misconceptions that people have about electrical power. Mark explained that if residents wished to buy “green” power through National Grid, they would be getting the same electric power as is being supplied by Hampshire Power, the difference being that the “green” company gets “green credits” in order to help it finish the project it is working on. Citizens who currently have National Grid as their supplier will automatically be switched to Hampshire Power unless they opt out. Citizens with a supplier other than National Grid will have to cancel their service with that company (not prior to October 31) and contact Colonial Power. The rate with Hampshire Power is locked in for a year, whereas National Grid can change their rates every six months. Colonial Power will be contacted for a date for them to come to the Town of New Marlborough.

Appointment of an Assistant Constable to post the warrant for the State election – A motion was made, seconded and so approved to appoint Police Chief, Graham Frank, Assistant Constable during the upcoming election.

Recycling Grant – The Town was awarded up to \$7500 for the new compactor at the Transfer Station, and up to \$506 for educational materials regarding the single-stream compactor and up to \$500 for a targeted small scale initiative.

Halloween - Selectman Shalaby indicated that only one police officer will be available Halloween to monitor and protect the Halloweeners. Detours will be set up on Norfolk Road where the children trick or treat, and also by the church where there is a Halloween party.

Cultural Council – There are two people who requested they be appointed members to the Cultural Council: Kathleen Potoski and Susan Cane. **A motion was made, seconded and so approved to appoint Kathleen Potoski and Susan Cane to a three year term to the Cultural Council effective immediately and ending June 30, 2017. Michele Shalaby recused herself from this vote.** A contract was signed by the Board so the Cultural Council will be able to receive its allocation of \$4,300 from the State. The dates of service are from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. **A motion was made and seconded and so approved for the Chairman to sign the contract in order for the Cultural Council to receive its allocation of \$4,300.**

School Issues – Selectmen Nat Yohalem announced that a letter had been received from Dave Hastings, Superintendent of Schools, asking whether or not the Town wished to withdraw its request for a discussion regarding closing of the two smaller schools. He asked that the Town respond prior to the October 30, 2014 meeting of the school committee. Selectman Shalaby has

drafted a response declining the option to withdraw and asking them to go forward with discussions outlining closing of the schools. A letter reflecting the Town's wishes will be sent to Mr. Hastings. **A motion was made, seconded and so approved to send a letter to Mr. Hastings, declining withdrawing from the discussion of closing two schools, with copies to the other four towns,**

Selectmen Yohalem reported there was a meeting of the Finance Committee of the School Committee on October 15, 2014 in which all five Towns were represented. The SBRSD Finance Committee educated the five member Towns regarding the bond issue needed to replace the roof and boilers at the Sheffield School. Selectmen Yohalem reminded the Board that the original estimate to replace these items was approximately \$3 million and that the State would pick up roughly half of those expenditures, and then the five Towns would be responsible for raising the other \$1.5 million. However, after further discussions with the State and some revisions in architecture, the amount was increased to \$6 million and the State would only pick up approximately 39.6% of those costs. The reason for the increase is certain State requirements must be met in replacing the roof and the boilers, which, according to the State, would result in substantial savings in heating bills and a reduction of carbon emissions. The SBRSD Finance Committee is looking at a \$3.7 million bond payable over ten years. New Marlborough contribution over a ten year period would be approximately \$88,000 per year. The SBRSD Finance Committee indicated it wanted to set up a Capital Planning Committee in order to project forward the needs of the schools over a certain period of time, including the percentage of operating and transportation costs, which could be 2.3%. Selectman Yohalem rejected the idea of a set 2.3% increase each year for operating and transportation costs. A Town meeting will be needed to approve the project and also approve the bond.

Treasurer's Position – Pat Mielke will be leaving this position, effective October 22, 2014. Jennifer Goewey has been hired for the position of Town Treasurer and has worked for the Town before and also in surrounding communities. The Board of Selectmen welcomed Jennifer to the "team."

Michael Skorput – Michael has given his notice and will be retiring effective January 3, 2015. An ad will be placed to seek the employment of a part-time Administrative Assistant, with municipal experience as his replacement. The Town is trying to coordinate this with other towns as a job-sharing position

Tax Collector – Kathy Chretien has temporarily assumed the position of Assistant Tax Collector, along with the assistance of Mari Enoch as interim tax collector, currently the Tax Collector in Monterey. It was decided not to interview anyone until a new Administrative Assistant is hired.

Shared Services – Selectman Yohalem reported there have been Shared Services meetings with other towns (Sheffield, Mt. Washington, New Marlborough, Egremont, Monterey; Tyringham and Sandisfield have expressed an interest as well) in order to secure better pricing for things such as highway materials/equipment/highway office personnel and office supplies. Currently the Town and the Town of Sheffield will jointly put a bid out for highway road materials and equipment rental. The Fire Chiefs and Police Chiefs will be asked to get together and provide a list of items, such as traffic cones, that could be purchased jointly in order to secure a better price. Police Chief Frank indicated he would like a second cruiser. Sheffield gets a new cruiser every 2 years; they strip the old cruiser and sell it for about \$1,000. Sheffield would like New Marlborough to bid on the cruiser as they have decided not to strip it. Police Chief Frank will look at the cruiser to determine whether or not this is a viable choice. Also mentioned in these meetings was whether

or not there was the opportunity to share police services, as well as ambulance services. Currently, Sheffield, Egremont, Mt. Washington, Monterey do not have ambulances, and all the towns have a shortage of volunteers. Further discussions will take place regarding shared services of ambulance assistance.

Being that there was no further business to be brought before the Board, a motion was made, seconded and so voted by all members to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Fleck
Administrative Secretary